

SEX WORK

Trans people in British Columbia have:

The right to **advertise our own sexual services online** or anywhere else. However, web pages and print magazines that carry our ads may face charges.

The right for our **partners** and anyone else in a 'legitimate living arrangement' to **benefit financially from our sexual services**, provided the relationships are not exploitive. However, you should be aware that the term 'legitimate living arrangement' has not yet been defined in law. Also, most work relationships between sex workers and others who benefit from their work are currently criminalized.

When seeking support, the right to access **gendered spaces** that correspond with our felt gender identity, regardless of our anatomy.

Unfortunately, the right to receive gendered services and participate in gender-based activities has one exception. A transphobic court case decided that if the organization offering the service is a non-profit organization whose primary purpose is to serve women, it is allowed to discriminate against trans women. That said, many women's organizations welcome and include trans women.

The right not to be harassed, targeted, arrested, or intimidated by police for doing sex work.

The right to **privacy** in our home from the police. Generally, we do not need to answer the door if the police come to our home.

The right to keep our **identity private** from the police. Officers do not have the right to know our identity unless they have reasonable suspicion that we have committed a crime. In this case, they are entitled to our name, address, and birthdate. There is no general

Activist Spotlight

Raven Salander earned her street smarts the hard way, and she puts them to good use as a counsellor, advocate, and volunteer. Raven began providing advocacy and support to street-level survival sex workers in 1988. She continues that work today as a volunteer with Boys R Us, a resource for male and trans sex workers. Find out more at transrightsbc.ca.

requirement to carry identification papers with us, so we don't have to show them identification unless you are driving a car.

Protection from **search and seizure**. This means unless we are detained or arrested, we do not have to let police search our body or possessions (including our car). An exception to this rule exists when crossing the border into Canada.

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The right to be referred to by the **name and pronouns that we use**.

The right to **have our concerns taken seriously** when we report a crime.

The right to turn to the police for help. The priority of the police is to ensure the safety and security of everyone, including sex workers.

The right to have all reports of violence against us treated as serious criminal matters by the police.

If you are a sex worker it is illegal to:

Communicate for the sale of sexual services in a public place, or any place that is open to public view, that is or is next to school grounds, playgrounds, or daycare centres.

The communicating law puts those of us who work outside at the greatest risk of arrest.

Stop or attempt to stop a vehicle, impede pedestrian or car traffic, or impede an entrance/exit to a venue for purposes of sex work.

Advertise collectively.

Those who put out or publish our sex work advertisements are also at risk of arrest.

Hire or work with third parties, or work together with others doing sex work.

This reduces our abilities to employ collaborative practices that make our work safer.

Who can I go to for help?

If you are in crisis, you can contact:

PACE Society at 604-872-7651 provides counselling, advocacy, peer education, support, and individual case planning and coordination. Located in Vancouver.

WISH Drop-In Centre Society to report a bad date by calling 604-669-9474, emailing wishdropincentre@telus.net, or faxing 604-669-9479. This service provides current updates on violence or predatory dates by and for sex workers. Bad date reports are taken by the WISH Drop-In Centre Society and are disseminated through a large network of service providers in contact with women working in the sex industry.

Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW) 24-hour toll-free crisis line at 604-255-6344 or 1-877-392-7583. They provide confidential, immediate emotional support, information, and referrals to people of all genders. They can also provide hospital accompaniment, counselling, and victim services for all women. Located in Vancouver.

If you are in need of support, you can contact the following organizations:

PACE Society at 604-872-7651 provides counselling, advocacy, peer education, support, and individual case planning and coordination. Located in Vancouver.

Taking Care of Business at 604-734-1514 is a weekly drop-in for trans sex workers. Food, information, and support are provided in a safe and confidential space. Located in Vancouver.

Boys R Us Drop-In at 604-633-4220 is a referral and outreach program that provides a safe, supportive drop-in for guys and trans folks who work or used to work in the sex trade. Located in Vancouver.

HUSTLE at 604-488-1001 ext 231 or 778-868-1776 (Outreach) supports male and trans sex workers as well as experiential youth by offering outreach and support programming in the community. Located in Vancouver.

WISH Drop-In Centre Society at 604-669-9474 provides services to women in survival sex work. Their drop-in centre is a safe place off the street where women can find acceptance, hot meals, support services, and more. Drug and alcohol free space. Located in Vancouver.

MAP (Mobile Access Project) at 604-720-5686 provides outreach, counselling, condoms and clean needles, basic first aid, immediate response to emergency services to sex workers, as well as bad date reporting. The MAP Van makes a nightly circuit through various sex work strolls. Operates in conjunction with WISH Drop-In Centre Society and PACE Society. Located in Vancouver.

SWAN (Sex Workers Advocacy Network) at 604-719-6343 is a culturally diverse group of women working to provide culturally appropriate and language-specific support, education, research, advocacy, and outreach for migrant, and immigrant sex workers. Located in Vancouver.

Health Initiative for Men at www.checkhimout.ca is a community organization dedicated to strengthening the health and wellbeing of gay men. Located in Vancouver.

Constable Linda Malcolm is the Sex Work Liaison Officer at the Vancouver Police Department specifically designated to assist when sex workers encounter violence and may be contacted at linda.malcolm@vpd.ca or via WISH or PACE.

New Hope Society at 250-562-8680 or email jan_newhope@hotmail.com is a sex worker outreach service. Located in Prince George.

We recommend:

The Bute Street Clinic for trans- and sex worker-friendly health care. They are an STI clinic and provide PAP testing, free condoms, and dental dams (when in stock) at 1170 Bute Street in the QMUNITY building in Vancouver. Hours of operation are 11am-6:30pm Mondays-Fridays.

AIDS Vancouver for condoms, dental dams, and fresh needles. They are located at 803 East Hastings Street in Vancouver.

The SPACES Study (www.spacesstudy.com), which is a collection of trade secrets from people of all genders.

For information on organizations and resources that can help you stand up for your rights, please visit transrightsbc.ca

The Catherine White Holman Wellness Centre and the VCH Transgender Health Information Program produced this document as general legal information. It was reviewed by The Law Office of barbara findlay, QC and is current as of July 2015. It is not legal advice, as each situation is unique.